

## Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Samuel Frankenheim, May 2, 1901

May 2, 1901. Mr. Samuel Frankenheim, Secretary of Deaf-Mutes' Union League, 77 Broadway, New York. Dear Mr. Frankenheim: —

Your note of April 26 received. You may not perhaps be aware that Mr. Andrew Carnegie has offered to give about five millions of dollars to the city of New York to assist in the establishment of small local loan libraries. I do not know all the details, but I do not see why our deaf friends in New York should not also receive the benefits of this munificent gift.

I would recommend you to write for information concerning the matter to Dr. J. S. Billings, Astor Library, New York. You are at liberty to mention my name.

In this connection, it occurs to me that it would be much better for the deaf of New York to take advantage of the library facilities that are offered to the people of New York, than to attempt to form a special library of their own. If there is any difficulty in you or your friends obtaining access to the Astor Library, and other libraries in New York, I shall be very glad to be of assistance in removing these difficulties, and I must say that I should prefer to help my deaf friends to extend their acquaintance with hearing persons and take advantage of the facilities offered to hearing persons for the perusal of periodicals and reference books belonging to the public libraries — in those libraries — and in their 2 own homes — rather than encourage the Deaf to limit their reading to those periodicals and reference books that they can themselves buy.

However much money the Deaf Mutes Union League may be capable of expending for the purchase of a library, it is obvious that a thousand times the amount would not create a library equal to those that now exist in the city of New York for the free use of the public.

## Library of Congress

Hearing persons have free access to these libraries, and can even make arrangements, by the payment of a small deposit by which books and periodicals may be taken home and read there.

These facilities should be, and I think are, open to deaf as well as hearing persons. If the deaf are debarred in any way from the enjoyment of these facilities, you may count upon me to help in having the deaf placed upon an equality with the hearing in this matter.

In a word, I think it would be much better for the Deaf to use the libraries that already exist rather than attempt to create a special one of their own. I think that the Union League would be more benefited if you were to take the money you propose to expend upon your library and use it instead in the payment of deposits for the members of your league in the Astor and other libraries of New York, so that your members could take books and periodicals home from the ordinary libraries. This would not cost much, and you would not lose the money, it would all be returned when the books are returned.

I would prefer to be of assistance to your League in helping 3 your members to enjoy the facilities opened to hearing people, rather than attempt to help you to establish a library of your own.

Yours very sincerely, Alexander Graham Bell

May 3, 1901. Mr. Thomas B. Connery, 7th Ave. & 56th Street, Carnegie Bldg. New York, New York. My dear Sir: —

Dr. Alexander Graham Bell desires me to thank you for the very kind invitation contained in your note of May 1st, and say that he regrets very much that he cannot be in New York on the 9th inst.

Very respectfully, Private Secretary.